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THE AFRICAN TRADE—RIGHT OF SEARCH—SLAVE TRADE UNDER THE AMERICAN FLAG, &c.

As these subjects are daily assuming a very high degree of importance in consequence of the peculiar relations existing at this time between this country and England, it may not be improper to devote a few pages of our Journal to a brief statement of what few facts we may be possessed of from personal observation relative thereto.

We shall confine our remarks principally to the condition of trade on that section of the western coast extending from Cape Palmas to the Bight of Benin. Of the coast farther to the leeward, we have no means of information not already before the public.

OF THE TRADE.—Previous to the last half century it is well known that the whole western coast, within the points above mentioned, was one vast slave mart. Not a harbour, river, bay, inlet, or even open roadstead, but afforded anchorage for vessels employed in this traffic. All the maritime powers of Europe were engaged in it. The 'Most Catholic and Most Christian Majesties' of France and Spain, and 'The Defender of the Faith,' of England, were the patrons and protectors of it, and participants in the profits accruing therefrom. The coast is now studded with forts and fortifications, erected specially for the safe and successful prosecution of this trade. The interest taken in this business by the Americans, was principally that of transporting the slaves from the barricoons and factories of the European merchant to the place of market. The articles principally used in this trade, with the exception of Tobacco from Brazil and the United States, were of English manufacture. Some few light articles of little value, and used principally as presents to the native chiefs, were obtained from Germany, France and Italy. As England abandoned this trade earlier than most of the other powers, and controlled many of the most important points of the coast where articles of her manufacture, heretofore used in the slave traffic, had become almost necessary to the native African tribes, she was very soon able to open a most lucrative trade with them for many important natural products of the country greatly in demand in the European market. These are the causes which first gave the English the advantage in the African trade. But they have retained this advantage from another cause than bare possession of territory and the fact of the almost exclusive demand for articles of English manufacture. Did none other exist, they

would soon find successful competitors in the American merchants. The nature of the coast and the character and habits of the natives is such as would render of no avail the fortification of a few points by any power in securing the trade. The whole coast-line is a market. The sea at all seasons of the year is so tranquil, and the anchorage along the coast so good, that vessels of any burthen can lie at anchor sufficiently near the shore to enable them to transact their business with considerable despatch. There is not an extent of over ten miles for the distance of two thousand, but affords of a canoe landing sufficiently safe to admit of landing cargo, and shipping of produce in return. Consequently no power could, by *land* force, monopolize the trade without belting the whole coast with settlements, which the fatality of the climate renders impracticable. The natives too, are averse to yielding their right of trafficking with vessels of all nations, and will in most cases only admit of settlement with a reservation of this privilege. The other obstacle to successful competition noted, viz: the productions of the articles for trade being of English manufacture, would soon be obviated by the Americans. Many, and in fact most of the staple articles of the African trade could be produced of better quality and at a cheaper rate in America than in England, were there a sufficient call for them to induce their manufacture. Many, too, are now actually produced here at a less price than in England, and one, the most important article of traffic, is produced solely by the United States, viz: the long, heavy leaf tobacco. Such articles as could not be manufactured in the United States as low as in England, or could not be procured here at all, could be readily shipped from that country and entered in bond, and afforded on the coast at a very slight advance on the price charged for them by English vessels. We say, *all these objections* to successful competition could be readily obviated by the enterprizing Yankee. Did none other exist, the American commerce would double and quadruple in a very short period, and doubtless in a very few years rival that of England. But the most serious bar to the consummation of this, and that too, which individual enterprize cannot overcome, arises from the manner in which that trade is carried on. Either from necessity or a design to produce the very result which has followed, the English traders very early adopted a system of *dash-ing* or making presents to the head-men or kings of the country, and then entrusting the cargo to such trade-man as they shall direct. In some places, as the Bonny and Calabar rivers, the dash or comey as it is there called, of a first rate palm oil ship, amounts to over one thousand dollars at the first cost of the goods. The whole cargo is then given on credit to such men of the place as the king shall designate, and he becomes responsible that payment shall be made at the time agreed upon by the parties. In most of the large places the amount of this comey and the terms of trade are matters of treaty between the kings of the country and the commander of the English squadron. In case payment is not made at the time agreed upon, some vessel of war is applied to and the payment enforced.

Now when the natives enjoy this advantage of credit, although they may receive the cargo at a high rate, no one can compete with the English trader

who cannot offer the same terms. This might be done if the natives possessed capital, but this is never the case; they are altogether improvident and live only on the slight commissions they make upon the merchandise passing through their hands to the bushmen. But this credit cannot with any degree of safety be given by the merchant vessels of any nation who has not a sufficient force on the coast to enforce payment in case it should be necessary, which will surely be the case if it is apparent no force is at hand. This is the principal cause why the English continue to monopolise at least four-fifths of the entire commerce of Western Africa. Their vessels of war belt the whole coast, they make treaties of commerce with the native kings, they seek redress for any injury sustained by their merchantmen, either in their persons or property, and in fact, they controul the whole commerce of the coast. *We affirm, that the want of adequate protection to our commerce is the only bar to a successful competition for this trade by American vessels.*

ADVANTAGES OF THE AFRICAN TRADE TO THE UNITED STATES.—The advantages of this commerce to the United States would arise principally from its affording an outlet or market for the productions of our soil, rather than from any present necessity we labour under of obtaining the African produce in return; although for this, there probably will be an unceasing and increasing demand.

The leading article in the African trade, and without which no commerce can be conducted with the native tribes, and which can be procured from no other source whatever, is the long leaved heavy TOBACCO of Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri. Deprive the European traders of this one article, and lucrative commerce with Africa would be totally impracticable. The manner of conducting trade will readily account for this. There being no currency or medium of circulation on the coast, all trade necessarily consists of the barter of one article for another; and as tobacco has from long usage become an article of necessity, a certain portion of the price paid even for the most insignificant article which they have to dispose of, must consist of it. It is much the same with many other articles of commerce, but not to the same extent as with tobacco. Hence, another great advantage the English merchant has over the American, as a much greater variety of articles for this trade are manufactured there than in America, and there being ever an abundance of tobacco in London and Liverpool, while few or no articles of English manufacture are to be found in the American market in consequence of the limited demand for them. It may be said that if the European traders are obliged to use our tobacco for the prosecution of this trade, it is sufficient for us that it finds a market. Not so. We lose almost the whole of the carrying-trade, especially to the continent, and gain not the immense profit which is realized by the Africo-European traders after having reshipped it to the coast.

The next in importance to tobacco are COTTON GOODS, for the most part heavy sheetings, checks and prints, those in which the cost of the stock is the heaviest item of expense. These it is well known can be produced in the United States as cheap or cheaper than in England, as has been proved in the South America markets. As yet, however, British prints, in imitation of India goods, have supplied the market, as the American commerce on that coast has not been sufficiently extensive to induce the manufacturers

to commence upon the articles. With regard to cotton goods we suffer more than in tobacco, for the cotton for that trade is not necessarily of American production; and besides, we lose the profit of its manufacture in addition to that of its carriage and the extra profit in Africa. We have placed cotton second to tobacco, merely from the fact that it is not *always*, like tobacco, demanded as a part in every contract. The proportion in *value*, however, used in this trade, is over three of the former to one of the latter, and by English traders as twenty to one. Much of that now used by American traders, particularly such as is printed after the India mode, is manufactured in England: but the plain bleached muslins of American manufacture have almost entirely superseded the English bafts and mamoodies, and are now even sold by the bale to English merchants on the coast.

GUN POWDER is the next article extensively used in this commerce, and the kind most in demand can be afforded on better terms in America, than in England, consequently, when it is not prohibited, as it is at all the English settlements, the American trader can undersell the European.

SPIRITS, either whiskey or rum, is likewise an article extensively used in this traffic, although to a less amount in value than either of the preceding. But, like tobacco, it must necessarily form a part of the cargo for the native trade. This can always be procured at as low a rate in the United States as in the English W. I. Islands, and the large markets for it at the leeward, particularly the Spanish and Portuguese, are almost exclusively supplied by American vessels.

These are the only articles used, in what is strictly termed the *native* trade, which can at this time be produced at as low rates in this country as in England and on the continent, and they constitute at least two-thirds in value of all the merchandise required in this kind of trade.

The articles which constitute the other third are those in which the labour is the most important item of expense in their production, and which can consequently be afforded much cheaper in Europe, where labour is less in demand than in the United States; as the finer cotton and silk fabrics, muskets, hardware, crockery ware, beads, and various articles of minor importance, generally used as ornaments and which are rapidly going into disuse, as the native tribes become more intelligent and civilized.

Other articles of American production are in limited demand at the present time at the various settlements on the coast, as flour, beef, pork, bacon, butter, lard, cheese, soap, candles, &c. The demand for these is increasing, and some few are coming into use with the natives. Little, however, can ever be expected from any of the last mentioned articles in comparison with the four others, viz: tobacco, cotton, gunpowder and rum. The demand for these is on a steady and rapid increase, and no calculation can be made as to the enormous amount that will be required to supply the immense thickly peopled and productive back country which depends on the west coast for its supplies.

Were our commerce well fostered and protected, as is the English at this time, our tobacco, which is now transported to Europe in foreign bottoms, and enriches their merchants by the enormous profits which they make on it in the African trade, would be shipped directly to the coast in our own vessels,

thereby not only benefiting the producer, but the American ship owner and the American merchant; a large and steady market would be opened for our cottons, not only to the advantage of the producer but the manufacturer; and very soon we should be able to compete with the English who have so long monopolised this profitable and rapidly increasing commerce. The advantages we possess of being able to afford even now on better terms than they, two-thirds of the actual value of merchandise employed in this trade, would soon induce the manufacture or importation of other articles required on much more reasonable terms than at present, so that no bar whatever would remain to our complete success.

As we before remarked, the *principal* advantage to be derived from commerce with Africa, is the profitable market it furnishes for two of our largest staples, viz: tobacco and cotton, together with other American products required to a less extent:—yet the return cargo received for the above generally consists of such articles as find a ready market in the United States, although there is not one of them but might at this time be dispensed with or procured from other sources. There is one, however, now the principal staple of that part of the coast of which we speak, that we predict, will, ere long, be one of the necessary articles of consumption in this and other civilized countries. We mean Palm Oil. This forms a heavy item in the list of the imports of England. It has heretofore been used there as in this country principally in the manufacture of soap, and even for that purpose it has to that country become an article of necessity. In the United States it is less in demand, from the fact that animal oils and fat can generally be obtained on more reasonable terms than in Europe. Recent experiments in England, however, have resulted in extracting the stearine from the oil from which can be manufactured firm and durable candles, said to be equal to those of sperm or wax. We are led to conclude from these experiments that palm oil is yet destined to supply the place of the whale and seal oil, which is so rapidly decreasing in quantity and procured with greater labour and difficulty every year. This oil can be produced by the natives in any quantity, and afforded at such rates as will pay well for its transportation. The traffic in it and the demand for it are rapidly increasing, and with this demand does the production of it increase also. In the vicinity of the American colonies the exportation of it has increased ten fold in as many years, in many cases an hundred fold, and yet the whole is produced within a very few miles of the beach. When we consider the great facility with which this article is manufactured from the palm nut, the wonderful productiveness of the palm tree, (the rein-deer of the tropics) and the boundless extent of territory in which it grows spontaneously, and the myriads of inhabitants which swarm these fruitful forests, ready to labour for the smallest consideration, we cannot doubt but this oil will yet form one of the heaviest articles of traffic in the commercial world.

The article next in importance to palm oil, exported from the west coast of Africa is camwood, one of the most valuable dye woods used in the arts, and we believe obtained almost wholly from that continent. Of this also, there cannot for ages be any lack, as but a short distance in the interior, say from 60 to 100 miles, it is one of the most common forest trees, and is

used as firewood in cooking. To what extent the demand for this will increase is impossible to say, as yet it has ever found a ready market in our northern cities.

The gold trade, which is principally monopolized by the English, is perhaps next in importance, or perhaps of more importance than that of the camwood, (being possessed of no statistics, we are unable to judge.) This is mostly confined to the various European settlements, to which the gold is brought from a great distance in the interior. In some places along the coast a little is washed from the sand and sold to transient vessels by the natives.

The ivory trade but a few years since was of more importance than both of the two last together, but it has gradually decreased, and probably on that section of the coast of which we are now speaking it is of less amount in value than either of the above. But little is bought by American vessels, as the United States cities offer a poor market for the article in comparison with those of Europe.

There are many other productions which have afforded cargoes and parts of cargoes to American vessels, and which are sometimes in demand and sometimes not as the case may be, but none of which we can ever calculate upon as the regular valuable staples of African trade. Among these may be reckoned rice, coffee, ground nuts, beeswax, gum copal, hides, ginger, malguatta, and red pepper, &c. &c.

Of the amount in value of the exports from the section of the west coast of which we are speaking, we have not the means of forming any *correct* estimate, and choose not to give an opinion at hazard. Of the proportion of this trade enjoyed by Americans in comparison with the different European nations, we are also without adequate information, and might err greatly in an opinion with regard thereto, but of this much we are certain—that a very large proportion of the trade is in the hands of the English—that their merchant vessels are protected—that treaties of commerce with the native chiefs are entered into by her majesty's officers—and that all laudable measures are taken both by the government and the merchantmen on the coast to preserve their commerce, even to the exclusion of that of all other nations.

And we here take occasion to repeat our previously expressed conviction, that were the same protection afforded to our merchant vessels—and a disposition shewn by our naval officers on that station to cultivate the good will of the African chiefs—were treaties of commerce entered into with them, whereby we should ever be guaranteed equal privileges of traffic with other nations—and were such contracts as are made by our merchants enforced, or were the natives led to believe they would be enforced, we should in a very short period, with the natural advantages we possess of producing at a less rate than our competitors, a majority of the most valuable articles used in that commerce, be able to compete with any and every other nation, and ultimately to gain the ascendancy. Without this fostering aid and protection we predict that but few years will elapse ere such treaties will be made and such a system of trade established by the English government and traders, as will greatly diminish our present struggling commerce, and ultimately drive our vessels from the coast altogether.

RIGHT OF SEARCH.—We trust we shall not be understood as presuming to discuss this question, or of professing to know any thing about the *propriety* or the *policy* of a concession of this right on the part of the United States government to the British crown. The question in the abstract is far beyond our depth, and as such we do not propose to meddle with it. But from our long residence on the coast, and familiar acquaintance with the course of events there for the past ten years, we feel justified in offering our opinion as to the results which will be sure to follow a rejection of this measure altogether. In speaking of past transactions, we refer only to those which have come within our own personal knowledge, and of course confined to that section of the coast between Sierra Leone and Cape Palmas, and we shall be obliged to state what are our *general impressions* of past events, rather than attempt to particularize as to dates, names of vessels, persons, &c. Our first visit to Africa was in 1831, as one of the physicians of the American colony of Liberia. At that time the principal slave mart on that section of the coast was at the mouth of the Gallinas river, at which were two very considerable and extensive factories. Some few branches of these factories from which slaves were occasionally shipped, were established at other points of the coast in the vicinity of Cape-Mount; as Digby, (opposite Cape Messurado, some 15 miles distant.) Sugary river, and Sheba river, on Shebro island. Many slaves were purchased to the leeward of Cape Messurado, at Grand Bassa, New Cesters, and Trade Town, although with the exception of the last named place, we believe no foreign agent resided on shore, and at none were regular barricoons erected. At Little Bassa, the slave factory of Don Miguel, then but recently established, had been broken up by the Liberians. The vessels engaged in the trade at that period, were either under the Spanish, Portuguese, Brazillian or French flags. It was not then known at the American colony that the U. S. flag had ever been used to shield vessels of another nation. There were then but a few British vessels of war on the coast, captures were rare, and even when made, and the vessels condemned to be sold as a prize, they were bought up by the wealthy slaver or his agents and immediately put in the trade again. The treaties between England, Spain, and Portugal were at that period very imperfect, granting the British cruisers very limited powers; so that but little bar existed to the successful prosecution of the trade. We believe it was necessary at that period for the cruiser, in order to make a capture, to take the vessel with the slaves actually on board, as no other circumstances would be sufficient to condemn the vessel.

The course pursued by the slaver was to land his cargo on his first arrival at the factory, and if a transient vessel, to put his agent on shore with instructions to have a cargo ready at a certain period. In the meantime the vessel would leave the ground and pass up or down the coast as she might see proper, buy up a cargo of rice and other provisions, fill her water casks for the homeward voyage, lay her false deck and return for her cargo. Should a cruiser be in sight, make off again and return after she had left, or lead her off in a chase till dark and then return. In the meantime the agent on shore would have the slaves all ready. At large factories two hours would be time sufficient to ship a cargo of two or three hundred. This state of things continued with little variation, for three or four years, until

the treaties became so modified both with Spain and Portugal, and the British cruisers so much increased, that this trade under the flags of either of these two nations became extremely hazardous. The French flag was not unfrequently used, and in some instances the Russian.

The trade, however, increased, notwithstanding the increased risk, in consequence of the advance in the value of slaves from the scant importations. The number of factories were greatly increased at the Gallinas, and a large and flourishing one was established at New Cesters, and several barricoons erected there. In 1836, the use of the United States flag commenced and gradually increased until 1838-39, when the whole coast was studded with small rakish schooners bearing this flag. For a long period the English cruisers forebore to trouble these vessels, but as they multiplied and it was found hopeless even to retard the trade in any degree without doing so, they commenced searching, and soon found that but few of them had any claims to American protection and much less to American ownership. Upon proof of their being Spanish or Portuguese property they were of course condemned, agreeable to the articles of treaty, but in those instances where there were ground for believing them American property, they were sent to the United States. At the commencement of this process of searching vessels bearing the American flag, it was conducted with extreme caution, and the decisions of the court of mixed commissions at Sierra Leone were extremely favourable to such vessels. Many that were taken to Sierra Leone were proved to be American property, and discharged after receiving full compensation for their detention. In many instances these same vessels were captured within one month, under Portuguese or Spanish colours loaded with slaves. This circumstance tended greatly to annoy and vex the officers of the British cruisers, insomuch that the course of forbearance or at least of circumspection, which had been pursued, was changed to that of indiscriminate search and overhauling and arresting on the slightest ground of suspicion. Many of the officers, too, of the British navy stationed on that coast, are entirely unfitted for their station. The late commandant of the station, Lord George Russel, was most of the time in a state of intoxication, consequently unfit for the transaction of any business; and with such a head it cannot be supposed that the under officers would deport themselves ever correctly. The prize money received by the officers and crew, in case of a successful capture, operated as a strong inducement to seize whatever come in their way. The apparent object of all the officers of the squadron under Lord Russell, was the making successful and rich captures, rather than suppression of the slave trade. An instance in proof came under our own observation. The commandant of a cruiser, (either the Forester or the Wanderer,) boarded a small schooner which lay at anchor near our vessel, and afterwards boarded us. He stated that the schooner had enough on board to condemn her, but she was old and would not pay him for taking her to Sierra Leone: he would wait and watch her until she had taken on board her slaves, which would much increase their prize money, and then capture her. She lay off for a day or two for that purpose, but in the night the schooner took on board her slaves and went to sea. Our brig, the Trafalgar, of this port, was boarded by a boat from the Forester, our papers examined and

a permit demanded for having on board oil casks which might be converted into water casks. We informed him that our port regulations required no such permit. He disputed and said, when the Forester came up, the brig should be captured and taken to Sierra Leone. It was thought best to leave the cruising ground of the Forester before she came up, and we accordingly put out. A few weeks after on visiting that section of the coast again, we discovered a vessel early in the morning, close in shore, getting under weigh. She soon made sail, headed for us and fired a gun. There being many vessels in sight, we were not sure the gun was for us, and being within three miles of our anchorage ground, and the light land breeze gradually dying away, thought best to keep under weigh, having hoisted our ensign. The vessel then passed an eighteen pound shot directly under our main yard, within a few feet of the man at the helm. We then lay too until the officer boarded us. He again examined our papers, demanded the same permit for the casks which we had before informed him we were not required to obtain. He examined the hold, found 100 bushels of rice, and declared the brig a prize, and the rice a sufficient evidence of her character as a slaver. The Forester came up, and the commander came on board, examined papers and hold likewise, and a council was held whether or not to declare the whole a prize. We stated to them the abundant evidence before them that we were the owners of the vessel, that we were well known as a regular American trader, that we had been in an important public station on the coast to their knowledge, and they well knew from many sources other than the papers of the vessel that she was bona fide American property and engaged in lawful traffic. The answer was, 'we well know that, but the only question is, cannot we get her condemned on account of the rice.' It was finally decided that there was not a sufficient quantity of rice on board to warrant a capture. Now the only analogy between this case and that of a slaver consisted in having rice on board, and rice is used by the slavers for feeding their slaves, and a cargo of rice with other circumstances would be sufficient to condemn a Spanish or Portuguese vessel.

We mention these facts to show how liable to abuse the Right of Search must necessarily be from incompetency of the officers, or too great inducements being held out for capture, as promotion or prize money, and how guarded any privileges of this kind ought to be, in order that our merchant vessels may not be subjected to vexatious searchings and injurious detentions.

In 1840, the commandant of the squadron for the windward coast (the section of which we are speaking,) destroyed all the barricoons at Gallinas and New Cesters, and dispersed the Spanish and Portuguese slave traders therein collected. This measure in addition to an increase of the number of cruisers, the universal and indiscriminate search of all vessels of what class and character soever, it would be reasonable to suppose would have entirely broken up the trade on that section of the coast; but the result is far otherwise. Under all these disadvantages it is still actively prosecuted under all flags or under no flag, and it is in vain that the eight or ten cruisers on a coast-line of some two hundred miles in extent, full manned, with abundance of boats fitted for the climate and seasons, with an assumed right to search vessels of all nations, attempt to extinguish it.

What then will be the result if no treaty of the kind is entered into with Great Britain, and the English cruisers receive instructions in no case to board or molest any vessel under American colours? Why a prosecution of the slave trade to such an extent as has not been witnessed for the last half century. All who are disposed to prosecute this traffic will have nothing to do but purchase an American ensign and then bid defiance to all check or restraint. *This will be the certain result of such a course.*

But the advocates of this measure say, send our own vessels on the coast, in sufficient force to prevent the abuse of the American flag. That indeed would do. But, *can we do it?—And, will we do it?* In the first place we have not the vessels in commission to spare.—We have not money to pay those already in commission.—Our government will not fit out and commission more vessels, when they have not the means to pay those already in service. And lastly, our vessels are not fit to sail on the coast unless they are vastly superior to those which have already been there. The two schooners which visited the coast in 1840, were wholly unfit for that service, and they performed but little or none. In the first place they were not provisioned but for a four months voyage, and they were not able to sail with the ordinary merchantmen. We saw an English cruiser take in more than half her sail in order to keep company with the Dolphin under full sail. They were on the coast too in the dry season only, when slavers seldom appear, and left it the moment the rainy and blowing season commenced, the very time their presence, could they have done any good, was required. It is unnecessary to go into a detail of the immense outlay, the enormous current expenses which would attend a successful effort on part of our government alone and single handed to prevent the disgrace of her flag. Even had we vessels fitted for that service, it would doubtless more than double all the current expenses of our navy. As a proof of this, it is sufficient to refer to what we have said above of the total inability of the English force to check the trade on a small section of the windward coast; to say nothing of their large squadrons in the Bights of Benin and Biaffra, which would also have to be visited by American vessels.

Even suppose we should send a large force on the coast, one that would be ample to effect the object—that it should be sent with the understanding that the flag prevents the vessel from any visitation or inspection by foreign force—what would it avail? When a United States vessel hove in sight the slaver would have only to run up a Spanish, Portuguese or English flag, and according to our own doctrine we could not touch her. But argument upon this subject is unnecessary. It is well known to every person who is at all conversant with the operation of our government, that no effectual force will be sent. In fact it cannot be done by our nation. The spare vessels in all the nations of the civilized world, with mutual Right of Search, are required for this important work.

As we said above, we do not profess to judge of the political expediency of entering into any treaty of this kind, but it does seem to us that *all objections* to such an arrangement that we have yet heard urged, are insufficient to counterbalance the baleful results which will surely follow our continued refusal, viz: *an indiscriminate and illegal search by the British cruisers, or a flourishing slave trade carried on under the American flag.*

Much is said by our political papers of the arrogant pretensions of the British crown: the search of vessels on the African coast has been confounded with the search and imprisonment of seamen previous to the last war. But we are utterly unable to discover any thing like arrogance in the claims of the present British ministry: in fact they make no *claim* at all. They merely *ask* the *privileges* of *inspecting* the *papers* of vessels bearing the American flag under *circumstances* of *suspicion*, or which there is reason to believe may be engaged in the slave trade. In other words, they ask that they may be allowed to capture a pirate or slaver, which it can be proved is not legally American property, even although it may be in possession of a flag of the United States. Now where is the arrogance in this, especially when they grant our cruisers the same right to examine the papers of all vessels bearing the British flag? It is objected, that this right will be liable to abuse. Will they be more likely to break a treaty which specifies and defines their duties in effecting a common laudable object, than to infringe upon rights where all fellowship is refused, and where our flag fosters and protects a traffic which they are nobly endeavouring to extinguish? Besides, it would take but a small force to represent our government on the coast, and protect our commerce from any infringement by a great and powerful nation, in comparison with what it would require to rescue our flag from desecration by pirates and slavers.

It is objected too that a *reciprocal* Right of Search is sheer mockery, inasmuch as the English cruisers so far out number our own. This objection is of no weight, for their commercial vessels as far out number ours as do their cruisers. So that whatever squadron we may have on that coast, will have an opportunity of searching the much greater number of vessels.

It is said that we have declared the slave trade piracy, and always punish it as such. Why then should we object to the assistance of a friendly nation in detecting the pirates who have assumed and dishonoured our flag? It matters little what we have declared the slave trade to be, if we take no measures to arrest it, and in the mean time prevent others from doing so too.

We have spoken above of what might very properly be called *outrages* committed by British cruisers coming under our own personal observation, when no Right of Search was acknowledged, except what was granted by Lieutenants Payne and Bell of the *Dolphin* and *Grampus*. Many and more aggravated instances of the same kind have occurred, and the details been laid before the United States government; yet in most cases, it is very apparent that the officers transcended their instructions. And why? From the very fact that our flag was constantly used as a cover to this illegal traffic, and our government by a neglect to increase and maintain a steady force on the coast, and refusing to concede a Right of Search, virtually sanctioned this prostitution; thereby defeating the intent of their arduous and dangerous labours. Nothing could be more irritating, and no stronger incentive could be given to the commission of these outrageous acts on part of the officers of British cruisers, than the course pursued by the United States government, in declaring the slave trade piracy, and then taking no effective measures to prevent its open prosecution under their own flag, nor permit others to do it in vessels in which the United States citizen has no interest whatever.

A perseverance in this refusal to form some treaty, allowing to a certain extent mutual Rights of *Search* or *inquiry*, will be sure to result in injury to our commerce on that coast. If we increase our naval force there, they cannot without some friendly and definitive understanding, act harmoniously with the British squadron; sources of misunderstanding will constantly multiply, fomented by their diverse interests. If, on the other hand, our force is not increased and we continue to disregard the prostitution of our flag—annoyances to our merchantmen will more frequently occur—we shall no longer receive the cordial protection of the British cruisers, which has ever been rendered to American vessels, and without which the whole coast would be lined with robbers and pirates—measures would be taken gradually to exclude us from the native trade by commercial treaties with the chiefs and other means heretofore adverted to, and but a few years would elapse before we should cease to care what fate awaited vessels with the American flag on that coast. It would seldom protect American bottoms. Our present profitable, but small and unprotected commerce, would be at an end.

By an opposite course, and that too we conceive consistent with our country's honour, and with but justice to the British crown, very different results might be produced. Let but a sufficient force be maintained on the coast to deter American citizens in true American vessels from engaging in this traffic, and at the same time to see that the articles of whatever treaty may be made shall not be infringed upon by the British cruisers—let our laws be so framed, (or if so framed now, enforced,) that possession cannot be obtained of American vessels and American papers by others than *bona fide* citizens of the United States—let a treaty be formed with England or the European powers that shall at least permit a right to examine the papers of the vessel and determine their genuineness—let our government be represented in the court of mixed commissions at Sierra Leone to see that exact justice be done to the owners and masters of such vessels as shall claim a right to the American flag—let these measures be adopted, and what will be the result? Why, in the first place, it will deter American citizens from engaging in that traffic, which to our certain knowledge they have often done the past five years—it will effectually prevent the prostitution of our flag by slavers of other nations—our commercial vessels would be protected from vexatious detentions and seizures by other cruisers, as no hope would exist of illegal condemnation while our own country should be represented in the court of adjudication, and all the difficulties would be obviated which have arisen from misapprehension of our position, and from a jealousy on part of the officers of the British squadron that we were disposed to thwart their efforts—treaties of commerce would be made with the native chiefs without opposition, and a fulfilment of their conditions enforced—in fact we should obtain a permanent footing on that coast of which we could not hereafter be dispossessed, when the commerce of Africa shall assume an importance unsurpassed by that of any other section of the tropical world.

AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT MOOTED.

The 'Emancipator and Free American,' the leading abolition paper of the north, has the following article which we copy entire that our quiet Maryland readers may know something of what is going on out o' doors.

Although the language is less fiery than is generally used in the abolition prints, yet we consider its character the most seditious and mischievous of any thing we have lately seen. It will serve to open the eyes of the good people of this Union, to the fact that a body of people among us, numbering some four hundred thousands, are already speculating and determining upon the course to pursue in case of war and invasion. The first proposal, or threat, is, 'an organised neutrality' on their part, 'until the laws of the Union and of all the states have made us free and equal citizens.' This language too coming from the public organ of this body of aliens in the midst of us. Well might a member of the Colonization Convention exclaim, 'when my country is invaded, with whom can I leave my wife and children to go and fight her battles?' The answer is here given, 'an *organized* neutrality.' The systematic and persevering action on the part of the free coloured people of this state and Union, headed and incited as they are by the abolitionists and equalizers of the north, contrasted with the perfect apathy of the whites of the middle states, is most truly alarming. *Action* of some kind must be had and that right speedily.

If the nominally free blacks are to be admitted to the rights and privileges of citizenship? If the prejudices of caste and colour can be overcome, and the two races become amalgamated? Why let it be done at once, let it come as a matter of favour and grace from the whites, ere it is claimed or *seized upon* by the blacks as a matter of right. But let it not be supposed that they will remain in their present condition; the thing is impossible; they must either become citizens or cease to inhabit the country, any medium or temporising course is alike impolitic and unchristian.

Let the article speak for itself.

THE DUTY OF COLOURED AMERICANS.

The present circumstances of our country present a number of solemn questions for the decision of four hundred thousand free Americans, who are suffering under an undeserved disfranchisement.

1. The first is, whether they shall fight in support of the present government of the United States.

There is no class of our people more deeply impressed with sentiments of patriotism than our citizens of color. In the war of our revolution, they were most exemplary in their devotion to the country. The venerable Captain Fitch, the father of the Rev. Charles Fitch, once gave at an anti-slavery meeting in New Jersey, an account of the services of a colored company, of which he was an officer. They bore cheerfully the hardships of the barefoot march through New Jersey and the cheerless encampment at Valley Forge, in the winter of 1777-8, tracking the ground with their blood, for the defence of republican rights which they have never been allowed to enjoy. Said he, 'The only fault was their eagerness in time of battle, but nobody ever thought of seeing a colored soldier run away, or shrink from his duty. James Forten, one of the first of nature's noblemen,

lately deceased, was taken prisoner at sea, and carried on board of the British flag ship in the West Indies. Here he became the companion of the admiral's son, and by his kindness, cheerfulness, and ingenuity in devising means to beguile the tediousness of a sea life, the lad became greatly attached to James, so that, when he was about to be sent home, the old admiral made the latter a liberal offer to go to England with his son. Forten thanked him for his kindness, but said that America was his country, and he loved his country and would not leave it. He therefore remained a prisoner of war, was sent to Halifax, and afterwards lay in the old Jersey prison ship during the horrid mortality that took place there.

During the last war with Great Britain, the citizens of color were equally faithful and serviceable. It is not believed there was a single instance in which they failed to volunteer for their full share of the toils and expenses and dangers of their countrymen. Gen. Jackson's two proclamations to the citizens of color at New Orleans will forever remain a cherished memorial of the merits of this class of our countrymen. In the proclamation of Dec. 18, 1814, the distinguished chieftain says:

'I expected much from you, for I was not ignorant that you possessed qualities most formidable to an invading enemy. I knew with what fortitude you could endure hunger and thirst, and all the fatigues of a campaign. I knew well how you *loved your native country*, and that you had, as well as ourselves, to defend what man holds most dear, his parents, relations, wife, children, and property. You have done more than I expected. In addition to the qualities I before knew you to possess, I found, moreover, among you, A NOBLE ENTHUSIASM WHICH LEADS TO THE PERFORMANCE OF GREAT THINGS.'

Such was the language held to the free coloured inhabitants of Louisiana twenty days before the battle of New Orleans, and when the British squadron covered the lake in the neighbourhood. Contrast this with the tone of the New Orleans papers during the last year, when danger was distant. George Wilson, too, of New York, who served in the Dartmoor prison, is now subjected to imprisonment in the ports of his own country for his color, and when he petitions Congress for the protection guaranteed by the Constitution, his petition is contemptuously rejected by the political fathers of the country. Poor encouragement to fight for one's country. A large proportion of the seamen by whom our principal victories were gained in that war, were men of colour, who were then enlisted without restriction, but now we have a standing general order of the navy, that not more than five in a hundred seamen enlisted, shall be coloured—and this is officially explained to be for the purpose of confining coloured men to menial services on board our vessels of war! Said a brave man in Baltimore, who fought in the defence of North Point, and afterwards served against Algiers in the *Guerriere*, 'there we stood intermingled, white and coloured, manning the same gun, and shot down indiscriminately; the officers exhorted us to fight bravely in the defence of our country; and then after the war was over they tried to get us to go to Africa, and told us that was our country; but I will not go. I feel that this is my country, and that I shall never go out of it alive.'

This, however, does not reach the question of fighting in defence of the federal government. Our countrymen may well feel attached to this their country, as they are, and to the general principles of our government, of which there can be no doubt, and yet they may not feel under obligations to take a voluntarily and active part in favour of a government, as now administered, which openly tramples on their rights, and delights to heap obloquy on their persons. As patriotic citizens, having a deep stake in the general welfare, we should lament the withdrawal of more than one-twentieth

of the available force of this nation from our common defence. But at the same time, we cannot take it upon us to advise our injured countrymen. Let them take counsel of their own manhood. And let those who would censure them, inquire how they would themselves judge if the case was their own. The following indication of what is to be, is from the 'People Press,' March 17, a weekly paper published and conducted by two young men of colour in New York.

PROJECT OF WAR.—Whilst we look forward with some degree of curiosity to learn in what manner our Secretary of State will sneak out of the bullying position into which his late despatch has placed him, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that the decision of the British Parliament, neither to indemnify, nor to deliver up the self-liberated slaves of the Creole, may lead to war. And as it is well 'in time of peace to prepare for war,' let us seriously and solemnly ask our brethren to make up their minds now, as to the position they may assume in such a catastrophe.

If war be declared, shall we fight with the chains upon our limbs? Will we fight in defence of a government which denies us the most precious right of citizenship? Shall we shed our blood in defence of American slave trade? Shall we make our bodies a rampart in defence of American slavery?

We ask these questions, because there is no law in existence which can compel us to fight, and any fighting on our part must be a VOLUNTARY ACT. The states in which we dwell have twice availed themselves of our voluntary services, and have repaid us with chains and slavery. *Shall we a third time kiss the foot that crushes us? If so, we deserve our chains. No! let us maintain an organized neutrality, until the laws of the Union and of all the states have made us free and equal citizens.*

II. A question of still deeper interest relates to the duty of the free people of colour, under the new construction given by the Supreme Court to the Constitution of the United States and the Act of Congress of 1793, concerning fugitives from slavery.

That decision is so unexpected, so unreasonable, so irreconcilable with the great principles of law, affecting the rights of personal security, that it would be presumptuous to attempt to determine, at the moment, how far it will subject the free people of colour to the liability of being enslaved by kidnapers. No doubt, the cupidity of the unprincipled will be tempted to push to the utmost the facilities given by that horrid decision. Violence, fraud, perjury, judicial corruption and bribery, will run riot under the countenance of that high tribunal. Some have feared that, so far as law is concerned, the decision has broken down every defence around the personal rights and the domestic enjoyments of these citizens. It is hoped that things are not so bad, or that, at any rate, an enlightened humanity, a rectified public opinion, will in a good degree supply the post of defence from which law has so basely deserted. But in this state of suspense and solicitude, it is not easy for us who have never been in like manner exposed, to enter fully into the case of our injured brethren. Truly they deserve our deepest commiseration. Many of them no not what to do. And in this exigency, it is not easy for a white man to give them counsel, for which he is himself willing to be responsible, first, at the bar of existing opinion, secondly, at the tribunal of his own manhood, and finally, before the throne of his God and Redeemer. We invite a frank discussion of the subject, and in the mean time will offer two or three hints towards the laying down of some general principles by which freemen exposed to be made bond-slaves may conduct in such a manner as to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man.

1. It is the duty of no man enjoying freedom, to allow himself to be made a slave, if he can avoid it.

2. The law, which imposes on a man under certain circumstances, the right of self-defence, constitutes him so far the *minister* and *executioner* of the law, and as such, under obligations to enforce its penalties 'for the terror of evil-doers.'

3. For whatever consequences the *necessary* defence of personal liberty may lead to, as to the person of the assailant, or the peace of society, the assailant, and not the assailed, is justly and legally responsible.

4. If a general understanding and concert on this subject is known to exist, together with a wise foresight in the provision of means, it will tend greatly to prevent all attempts at kidnapping in the free states.

More hereafter.

Here in these last four propositions are embodied the principles of action which are to govern the fugitive slaves of the south and their abettors. The decision of the highest judicial tribunal in this Union is to be set at nought, and the fugitive slave and malefactor is to become the 'minister and executioner of the law.'

What can we expect from the 'more hereafter' if this is but the beginning.

We notice in the Philadelphia papers the death of James Forten, a venerable and respectable man of colour, long time a resident of that city. His funeral was attended by a very large concourse of both white and coloured citizens, and most of the papers of that city contain very respectful and kind obituary notices of him.

We had a slight acquaintance with Mr. Forten, and had reason to think very highly of him as a man of honour, integrity and true respectability. We regret most deeply however that he should have been so decided an opponent of the colonization cause, and we believe he has been mainly instrumental in enlisting the whole mass of the coloured population of our cities in a crusade against it. He no doubt was actuated by the best intuitions, based upon the hope of shortly seeing his brethren admitted to all the rights and privileges of citizenship in the United States. But he lived not to see that day, and we much fear the Simeon is not yet born that will.

AMISTAD AFRICANS.—An arrival at New York, on Sunday, from Sierra Leone, brings information that the Amistad Africans had been recognized by some Mendians, hundreds of whom were at that place. The missionaries that accompanied them to their native land were in excellent health, with the exception of Mrs. Raymond and her infant daughter, both of whom had a slight touch of the fever.

SLAVERS.—The N. Y. Courier says: 'Capt. Price, of the brig James Hay, arrived from Sierra Leone, reports that previous to his departure, the Spanish schooner *Presidenta*, a Portuguese brig and two schooners were brought in by British cruisers, on the ground of being engaged in the slave trade.'

☞ All communications intended for the Maryland Colonization Journal, or on business of the Society, should be addressed to DR. JAMES HALL, General Agent, Colonization Rooms, Post Office Building.

